THE PATH OF THE ETERNAL WISDOM

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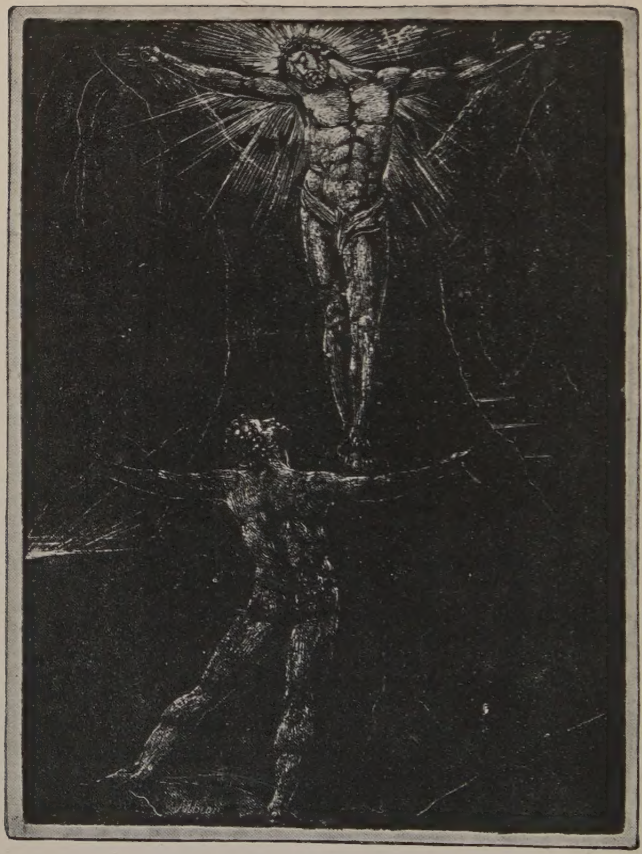

"THE ETERNAL WISDOM"

The Path of the Eternal Wisdom

A Mystical Commentary on the Way of the Cross

By

John Cordelier

E. UNDERHILL

O Sapientia, quæ ex ore Altissimi prodiisti, attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter, suaviterque disponens omnia: veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiæ!

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The Path of the Eternal Wisdom

THE VOICE OF THE ETERNAL WISDOM

All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment;

That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:

While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;

Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.

Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.

But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

INTRODUCTION

The mysteries of the Christian Church are all divine comedies: mighty dramas of the spirit, in which life's transcendent secrets are caught, translated, made accessible to men. Fold within fold lie the meanings of these amazing dramas: meanings which seem to possess new and more sublime significance upon every plane of achieved existence, in the world's long upward journey from desire to love. Perhaps, then, the individual soul may best measure her own difficult course towards the mount of her transfiguration by the extent to which the supra-sensible is found by her in these common symbols of her faith: their crescent power of transmitting the Uncreated Light. This is true of all our rites and ceremonies: our scriptures, sacraments, and creeds.

Behind the veil of that traditional and historical meaning which they bear for ordinary piety, these open magic casements on the Infinite: disclose to love's pilgrim the landscape through which he must pass: play out, against the background of Eternity, the quest of the Inviolate Rose.

The Way of the Cross is such a drama: a passion-play alike of God's way in the Cosmos, and of the soul's way upon its path to God. It shows to us the map, traced and trodden by Christ our Forerunner—graved by Him upon the earth in man's interest—of the only pathway from illusion to reality. Because in it He disclosed the way of God immanent in His Universe, the road by which the Son returns to the Father's heart, it is of necessity the way of each one of us in so far as we are obedient to the Spirit of Life. It is the path which the Divine Lover treads on His way to our hearts; we, then, must tread it with Him in our loving efforts for other

men, if we truly desire that union with His Absolute Life of which the mystics incessantly speak as life's meaning and end. More, it is the path which the Cosmos itself must follow, if it would attain the realm of pure Being, the Perfection for which it was made.

If the Cross be anything at all, it is the ground-plan of the Universe: it stretches from nebula to nebula, linking the furthest limits of the worlds, holding out to them the wounded hands of Love. All progress is born of that clash of love and pain which is the secret of its heart: its mysterious torment lies at the root of all our joy. "*Crux ergo semper parata est, et ubique te expectat*" (1): not the dull burden of popular piety, but the life-giving sign of heroic surrender. Those who elude it miss for ever the higher synthesis of life and death. Hence it is that

> "In Cruce sub sphæra
> Venit sapientia vera"

seems to those who can read its riddle as fit a motto for philosophers as for saints. It is the formula of the divine alchemy which shall restore his lost goldness to man.

Science and sanctity, following the star of truth by their different roads, meet at the foot of the Cross, and find here the reconciliation of their disparate energies: as, in the old legend, the Magus who missed the way to Bethlehem was found on Calvary. It is odd, indeed, that any biologist can be other than a Christian, when he finds on every hand Christianity's sternest symbol scored deep in the very foundations of the House of Life: finds pain, struggle, and the sacrifice of the individual to be as essential to the diurnal processes of reproduction as to the slow-growing perfection of the type.

"Ecce in cruce totum constat, et in moriendo totum jacet: et non est alia via ad vitam et ad veram internam pacem, nisi via sanctæ crucis, et quotidianæ

mortificationis. Ambula ubi vis, quære quodcumque volueris: et non invenies altiorem viam suprà, nec securiorem viam infrà, nisi viam sanctæ crucis. . . . Converte te suprà, converte te infrà: converte te extrà, converte te intrà: et in his omnibus invenies crucem" (2).

There is, as it seems, a breach in the Circle of Being, the Ring of Perfect Love, which must be healed before man's soul can complete the spiral path of its evolution, and attain the free perfection for which it was destined: that state which the mystics call union with our Origin, which is God. God's will for us is marred and broken by our wilfulness. The Way of the Cross is the Bridge which Love has cast across this breach: and God became man to show man how it must be made. The Word of Creation, Who is both Life and Love, could not leave incomplete the road by which our scattered spirits must come home. Therefore He filled by His Incarnation, consolidated by His Passion,

the gap between the wilful individual soul and the all-willing Absolute: between man and God: between the spark and the Central Fire.

"Cleave thou thy way with fathering desire
Of fire to reach to fire."

This is the message of the Living Christ to every living spirit: and these are the marching orders of every mystic seeking his home, every Christian who is set on the Way of the Cross.

Energy, effort, adventure! The meek-eyed religion of that "pale Galilean" Who came that we might have life more abundantly is instinct with these things; linking with humanity's most ordinary disabilities, most squalid failures, least impressive pains, its one possible participation in Divinity. Here then, as it were, the mystic craving is brought to earth; and the divine adventure made accessible to the poor body as well as to the immortal soul. "None may attain the supreme heights of the Godhead," said the Eternal Wisdom

to Suso, "nor taste its ineffable joys except through the contemplation of the bitterness and lowliness of my Divine Humanity. The higher the flights of him who has not passed by the Way of My Humanity, the greater afterward shall be his fall. My Humanity is the path which all must tread who would fain find that which thou seekest: My sufferings are the door by which all must come in. Cast away, then, all cowardice out of thine heart, and with knightly valour ride with Me in the lists: for it becomes not the squire to hesitate, where his lord goes forward with gallantry and courage. I would arm thee in mine armour, since it is meet that thou shouldest suffer all that I have suffered in so far as thy nature is able to endure."

No vicarious atonement, then, will satisfy the instinct of the true lover of reality. He desires life with all its accidents and misfortunes: the high heroic life of the chivalry of God. He

too must "ride in the lists"; go with the Pattern of all Knighthood on the most bitter and most blessed of all quests. Man, contemplating Divine Humanity, ascending with it in thought the Hill of Calvary, ascends in this act to the summit of his spirit: goes up into the mountain to meet God. It is true that the journey can only be undertaken at the cost of failure, humiliation, and agony: but there is no other path which will lead him to the Rose of the World.

> "Far off, most secret, and inviolate Rose,
> Enfold me in Thine hour of hours, with those
> Who sought Thee at the Holy Sepulchre."

. . . Not with those amateurs of Eternity who seek the substance by refusing the accidents: but with the virile and unconquerable pilgrims who were not afraid to look for beauty in corruption, life in death.

It has been said that "whatsoever we may do, our hunger for the Absolute will never cease." It will never cease, at any rate, until it be satisfied;

and there is only one way in which that satisfaction can be attained. We can attain the Absolute only by living it, by uniting ourselves with its life: and that Life was dramatised once for all in the Incarnation of the Word. Hence the hard paradox that humanity's real happiness lies in the acceptance of pain: that joyous suffering is the Secret of the King. The Way of the Cross, because it goes deathwards, is the Way of Life. It is the only way which leads back to God: Who is, said Saint Augustine with a fine disdain of anthropomorphic symbols, "the Country of the Soul"—the country, as he says in another place, "which is no mere vision, but a home."

That only true Object of our love, Who is at once above life and in it, companions us upon this way and awaits us at its end: the magnet of the Universe, drawing all men unto Himself—and not merely all men, but all creation, since the pull of universal

attraction felt through all the worlds is but a reflection of that infinite desire with which all things turn towards the Heart of God, their source and also their end. "I saw Him and sought Him; I had Him and I wanted Him," said Julian of Norwich; "out of Whom we be all come, in Whom we be all enclosed, into Whom we shall all wend"—since the Bridge of the Cross has made the soul's orbit complete.

To this journey, then, we are called by Somewhat without us: thither we are pressed by Somewhat within. The Appellant Voice rings through the Universe, and there is that within us which answers its cry. Out of every station, out of every century, out of every faith, we see souls drawn forward irresistibly on this one path to their Home. The Way of the Cross is cut through the cloister and the battlefield, the study and the market-place, the palace and the slum. From all these there start

up, abruptly, wide-eyed souls who, seeing before them Perfection in one of Its aspects, elect to follow in Its footsteps and share the fate It suffers in an imperfect world: despising the Cross for the sake of the glory that shall be revealed. Like the spirits of the blessed dead whom Dante saw taking ship for Purgatory, and singing *In exitu Israel* as they went towards the purifying flame, those who enter on this Way may well sing a song of liberation. In the words of an old mystic, they are "free souls"; for "the Holy Ghost hath His sail in their ship." Driven forward by the Wind of God, they go in the wake of their Pattern: are at one with the pilgrimage of the worlds.

"Quis patitur?
Christus Verbum,
Sapientia Patris.
Quid patitur?
Spinas, verberas,
Sputa, crucem.
Sic patiente DEO
Tu quoque disce pati" (3).

FIRST STATION

JESUS CHRIST IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

The Eternal Wisdom judged by His Creatures

The Eternal Wisdom, since He comes in one disguise or another before each one of us, is judged by each one of us: for in His presence it is beyond our power to remain indifferent. Where the Living Christ is concerned, our very assumption of apathy is really a taking of sides. "He that is not with Me, is against Me." Sooner or later, in one form or another, this forced option confronts us: our will inclines—be it ever so little—this way or that, towards the Self or the non-Self, the Unreal or the Real: and, hardly aware perhaps of the awfulness of the moment, we have delivered our verdict upon God.

It is in accordance with the para-

doxical nature of the spiritual life as it is seen from below by the human intellect, that by this our judgment upon Him, we too are judged. "Guilty or not guilty?" says earthly justice. "What think ye of Christ?" says the voice of Truth. In one language or another, under one symbol or another, every man is asked this question: and reveals himself inevitably in his reply. "What we are, that we behold: and what we behold, that we are." The implacable judge of the old theology no longer thunders from the heavens, but speaks without utterance in our own heart. We pronounce our own sentence, irrevocably, in the moment in which that heart pronounces sentence upon Reality—says what it thinks of God. It declares, in this action, its own measure of goodness and truth; and against this awful self-judgment there is and can be no appeal.

We are confronted, in that hour, by the Divine Word: by that Life in

Whom is the life of men. Sometimes the encounter is like that of Pilate—none of our seeking. Sometimes it is that of Herod—the disappointing, hardly recognised satisfaction of our vague and selfish curiosity about spiritual things. Sometimes it is that of Caiaphas—deliberately sought for evil ends. God comes to us, for the most part, so gently and willingly, His advent conforms so humbly to the conditions of His creatures, the freedom of our spirits is so great, that we may choose almost any part in the World's Tragedy. The only thing which is beyond our power is to remain wholly apart from it. It is open to us to betray, to judge, to mock, to deny; to follow His footsteps, to watch Him from the roadside, to serve Him on the way. Some, when He confronts them, still go through the solemn farce of washing their hands; refusing all responsibility. In vain. In this very act they send Perfect Love to the Cross. In the choosing

of our part in the moment when He stands before us, we judge Him, and He us.

There are three forces within the Self, three aspects of our being; which, if we place any one of them upon the judgment seat, will judge Him unjustly.

Caiaphas the High Priest, the conserver of our prejudices, will judge Him unjustly because no formalist can perceive God when He works in and through life itself, instead of in and through the symbols we have chosen for ourselves. Jesus of Nazareth, the free spontaneous incarnation of the Godhead in human life, cannot be known and loved by the timid and prejudiced reactionary which lurks in each man's soul; which sets up egoistic standards of truth, and is beset by evil fears when they are threatened by the onward sweep of the unresting Spirit of Life. Caiaphas is afraid of life: envious of life. Its simplicity and freedom evoke his malice and dis-

trust. He looks for a Messiah who will conform to his own formulæ: all others are but pretenders. Caiaphas worships creeds and laws—the traditions and definitions of theology or of science—but not a living God. When life, disconcerting in its creative liberty, thwarts tradition—when experience runs counter to science—he cries "Blasphemy!" When the Divine Nature is manifested under an unexpected form, disappointing us by its humility of circumstance, confusing us by its defiance of all our ancient standards, amazing us by the secret and insistent power which is yet so different in kind from all that our imaginations had persuaded us to expect; then he is filled, not with awe, but with terror and wrath. His is the first voice to send the Eternal Wisdom to the Cross.

Herod will judge unjustly because he is delicate, supercilious, self-indulgent: because his attitude towards the spiritual universe is one of egoistic

curiosity. He is, as we say nowadays, "interested in all these things"; and, by this very fact, hopelessly separated from them. He is a taster of life, not immersed in it. No amateur of the marvellous is capable of recognising the Living Christ: at most, he will deck Him in the gorgeous robe of condescending approbation and send Him away. Herod never condemns God: he only finds Him rather commonplace and uninteresting. To him the Eternal Wisdom seems folly: more, in the bottom of his heart he knows it to be dangerous folly, which would destroy for ever his sleek comfort, his tolerant curiosity, his passive and amiable interest in the marvellous, did he but listen to its voice. But the voice speaks ordinary and simple things: the Speaker seems poor and ineffectual to one who demands an atmosphere of wonder as a necessary ingredient of supernatural reality. There is little to tempt Herod to exchange a tepid and comfortable curi-

osity for the harsh and dreary actualities of spiritual experience. It is the horror of the situation for the Herod in our souls that there is no third choice: we leave Perfection to Its fate, or take up the Cross ourselves and follow It.

Pilate, the ultimate tribunal of the unregenerate mind, implicitly indifferent to God, will judge unjustly because he represents the convention which regards culture and civilisation as more important than reality, the keeping of rules as safer than the seeking of truth, and the ideals of government as taking precedence of the expression of life. It grieves the æsthetic instincts of the Pilate in us that the Beautiful, the Innocent, the Ideal, should be hurt. He loves order and moderation, hates the fanatics of all creeds, and feels an impatient disgust for the vulgar and ignorant minds which insist upon the condemnation of interesting, picturesque and harmless things. But it is the way of the

world: and so, he supposes, beyond his control. His business is to manage the world in the interests of law, peace, and comfort — concrete matters, to which clear benefits are attached. Life, says Pilate, is inevitably a matter of compromise. There is no use in forcing on a community ideals which it does not understand. For himself, he finds no fault in the Eternal Wisdom. But the people prefer Barabbas. So he washes his hands, ostentatiously, in the presence of the crowd which he both despises and fears; and—obedient to the wishes of the majority—releases to them the Evil and sacrifices the Good.

Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, then, stand for those three great forms of disharmony between man and the transcendent which will lead to the condemnation of the Living Christ. "The Word of God," says Ruysbroeck, "is none other than *See*." The Word is alive, says Boehme, and no form can contain It; because It is infinite, like

God. All the unjust judges in man's soul bring with them their containing formulæ, the demands of the traditional, the marvellous, the rational: and because the Eternal Wisdom cannot conform to them, they cry "Art *thou* the Son of God?" and condemn Him to the Cross.

But He is the Creative Logos, and His Word to us is the gift of spiritual vision; in which, for an instant, we transcend the scattered, partial images of the churches and the thinkers, and see Him in His own light. There is a moment in every life in which He is thus seen standing before us. He does not plead with us or explain Himself. He stands and waits to be judged. To each of us comes this transcendent opportunity, this decisive if momentary touch of Divine Love upon our eyelids, healing if we will the blindness of our earth-born sense. At that moment we see Christ before our judgment seat, and to each human soul is given the awful choice between the

crowning and the crucifixion of its God. The deep and urgent love of the Creator for the creature brings Him thus to our doors; places Him in His fulness and beauty at the mercy of each one of those separated spirits whom He has made for Himself, and who have no rest apart from their goal.

Then it is that, because of these things within us which are violently antagonistic to the Divine, we fail to recognise the Personality who stands before us. Judged by the world's standards, seen by unloving eyes, the quietness and simplicity of Reality seem inadequate to its stupendous claims. So we take sides with the concrete certainties of life; and in this act—unconsciously almost—we trace the Way of the Cross and leave Him to tread it alone.

This, then, is and has ever been the attitude of the natural, earth-encompassed Self towards the Striving Christ: these are the conditions of

the everlasting duel between man's separated will and the Will of God. But when, for the individual, that duel is over, when Love has made a wound in the hard crust of selfhood and permitted the inflow of the Divine, the relation is altered. Then, as the mystics say, the "New Birth" takes place: man, stung to new life by this tincture of Eternity, comes forth from the cave of illusion into the amazing atmosphere of reality. Then Christ's experience becomes ours: we are swept from the judgment seat into the vortex of life: are made squires of the Eternal Wisdom, and must ride with Him in the lists.

Each of us, when we thus deliberately accept the life of divine chivalry, must expect in our turn to be judged by that world which our new simplicity defies. It is the first condition of our initiation into the secret society of the Friends of God, that we take our place with Him before the judgment seat of the world; and are with Him mocked,

patronised, and misunderstood by the world's religion, the world's culture, the world's power — all the artificial contrivances that it sets up as standards by which to condemn Reality. In the very moment in which we declare that it cannot give us that intangible Kingdom to which we aspire, we alienate its sympathy, insult its common sense. It goes up into the judgment seat, prepared to deal wisely with the rebel in us, tolerantly with the fool. Then ignorance, idleness, and cowardice condemn us at their ease, as they once condemned the First and Only Fair.

SECOND STATION

JESUS CHRIST RECEIVES THE CROSS

The Eternal Wisdom takes up the Burden of the World

That outpouring of the Divine Wisdom, that life-giving link made between human and divine, which we call the Incarnation of the Word, is from first to last a free gift; a sacrifice of the fulness of divine perfection, that thereby humanity's true measure may be fulfilled—"man's nothing perfect" amended by the influx of "God's all-complete." It is the penalty of this descent of the Desirous God towards us—of this sharp exhibition to the dim-eyed soul of Eternal Wisdom at work within His world—that the full burden of man's mistakes, confusions, ignorances, and sins should be taken up

by the Unerring, the Lucid, the All-knowing, the Good.

God's union with man means union between the Sinless and the Sinner: a troubling of the crystal deeps of Pure Being that it may become available for the healing of human life. It means on the one hand the free gift of an incredible generosity: on the other, an amazingly reluctant acceptance of that Gift. It means Perfect Harmony, wounded by its love for a discordant world, taking up and bearing the Cross which that world has fashioned by its perversion of divine reality. "When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." The Crown of Creation, if He is to crown His work indeed, must descend to the depths; and climb up our hard and difficult Ladder of Perfection to the Pure Being whence He came. The Word must become flesh, and dwell amongst us. It is this maiming of God's Beauty in the interests of His self-giving love,

this humiliation of Infinite Goodness that it may meet our finite spirits half-way, which constitutes the true sacrifice of the Lamb of God "slain from the foundation of the world." Implicit in the very framing of those conditions which ensure the attainment of our spiritual quest, that sacrifice is shown anew to us, day by day, upon the altars of the Christian Church. It is, says that Church, our own fault, our wilful separation from Him, which conditions this descent in quest of us; and our own bitter, cross-laden, but God-accompanied return.

As we stand at the foot of the Hill of Calvary and look up the path which we ought to tread, it has an austere beauty, a splendour of ascending outline, fitly crowned by the life-giving Tree of the Cross which grows upon the summit of the Mount. Valley-dwelling Christians always speak with enthusiasm of their faith: from this point of view, it is so easy and natural

to talk of the incomparable loveliness of the Christian idea, to feel the fine ecstasy, the poetic fervours, of one who contemplates from the comfortable lowlands the jagged and noble outlines of the Everlasting Hills.

But for that other and more Christlike type, the silent, dogged climber of the mountain, the pilgrim upon the Way of the Cross, there is little opportunity for this æsthetic admiration of an inspiring landscape. He seldom speaks of it, hardly perhaps notices it, because he needs his strength for other things. He is become a part of the picture, has accepted his share in its life; and therefore cannot see it any more. Save in some fortunate moments, he can barely see his goal. What he does see and know, is the next bit of loose and stony path which must be trodden, the difficult rocks which cannot be avoided, the unending slope that gets steeper; the growing weakness, the solitude, the burden, the

cumulative hardships and miseries of the Way.

Alpine climbing, said some cynic, is a deliberately disagreeable journey, ending in the attainment of a discomfort greater than all that has gone before. It is a hard and dangerous progress towards cold, solitude, and general wretchedness. He might have added that this absurd performance is, curiously enough, the expression of some instinct buried deep in man's spirit: that there is an undying family for whom it represents reality, the only perfect object on which their energies can be spent. In the gratuitous hardships and dangers of the mountain such persons find the deep satisfaction of deep needs: and no wonder, since their bodies here dramatise the necessary adventures of the soul. "Show us the path which leads to the purging mountain!" they cry with the spirits of the newly dead. To tread faithfully the hilly path of knowledge or of love, is to know

something of this satisfaction, the supreme exaltation of the mountaineer: the mingling of hard going and high passion, of patience and romance.

But the passion and romance find little encouragement in the journey's outward circumstance. They must be fed from within, nourished by faith, if they are to survive. Here, at this point, the heavy burden and the dusty path fill up the conscious field. The companion of the Eternal Wisdom, whose journey to the bosom of the Father is set in a world of conflict and disease, of corruption, deformity, and vice, must give up Beauty with the rest. Perhaps he will find it again on the mountain-top, when he is raised up to the only true view of that great world; and there, discovering the Inviolate Rose in the Cross, at last understands the difficult Cross in the Rose. But when he attains those summits, it is likely enough that long pain and utter weariness

will have blurred his vision, and taken his desire of loveliness away.

This too, then, we see as a part of the sacrifice which, since Perfection has made it for us, we can do no less than make for It: the giving up of Beauty's perspective—the view from the heights. We needed the Creator's acceptance of the limits of His own creation, His pilgrimage by our side, within our heart, to teach us that the World of Becoming—the vital, striving world of opposites in which we are immersed—does not attain its end by the far-off and rapturous contemplation of Reality: by any act of knowing, by any perception of truth, however sharp, joyous, and accurate it may be. The mystic life we seek is a life of active love and not of static knowledge: "Love cannot be lazy," the mystics say. To be, to live, to move eagerly deathwards, to plod up the stony, slippery, and exhausting slopes of that austere mountain whose aspect has filled us with dreamy delight—this

is to share the God-driven life of the Universe, and this is the choice of all who seek the Eternal Christ.

As we go, the life-giving Cross upon the summits of existence, the mystical dream crucifix which crowns our altars and forms a focus for our prayers, seems to be lost in the mists. But its place is taken by another, nearer sign of divine and self-giving life: the rough and clumsy cross, a home-made copy, which the pilgrim of the Infinite must carry all the way. "I will not leave you desolate: I will come unto you." To each it comes, this first-hand participation in Wisdom's eternal passion: oddly disguised, but always recognised by the eyes of love.

It has been said of the martyred saints, as they stand before the altar of the Lamb, "*Ils tiennent dans leurs mains les instruments de leurs supplices, qui sont aussi les instruments de leur gloire.*" There is no other true instrument of glory but the Cross, and it is at our own peril that we leave

it behind. No common ladder up to heaven awaits us. Each man must bear his own uphill with him, "not without dust and heat," if he would have it when his hour of need arrives. "*Pone te ergo, sicut bonus et fidelis servus Christi, ad portandam viriliter crucem Domini tui*" (4).

We, then, must go up, cross on back, goaded and exhausted, into the mountain to meet God. This strange harsh road, so insulting to our soft civilisation, our "joy-philosophy" and all the rest, remains the only path of wisdom and of love: this secret journey the only thing worth doing in a world which is more concerned to do than to be. "*Moses plus profecit in monte adorando quam multitudine bellantium*" (5). We think as we read these words of the prophet's silent hill-top ecstasy, of the state of holy inactivity, of "mystic peace" in which he gazed on God; and compare it with the vulgar rough-and-tumble of the battle-fields of earth. But we

forget that this moment of supreme communion had been paid for by the stern and lonely struggle up the mountain — by dust and heat and breathlessness — by a long-drawn effort, a growing weariness, possessing few elements of dignity or romance. We forget, too, that the great initiate of Reality who came down with shining face went up, a tired climber, in the spirit of obedience, not the spirit of hope: that a cloud covered the summit of the mountain, and he had no positive assurance of a vision at the end. So it is with all who climb the long and dreary hill of contemplation to the point at which they can look with Bunyan through "the glass that is called Clear." They go with a "blind intent stretching," a stern determination to endure. Sinai is but the other slope of Calvary. The old dispensation, as well as the new, was acquainted with glad suffering, hard work in the interests of pure love: and Christ's life here gave the divine

sign-manual to the deepest intuitions of the ancient world.

"Many," says Rutherford, "would follow Christ, but with a reservation, that by open proclamation Christ would cry down crosses, and cry up fair weather, and a summer sky and sun, till we were all fairly landed in heaven. I know you have not so learned Christ, but that you intend to fetch heaven, to take it with the wind on your face; for so both storm and wind was on the fair face of your lovely forerunner Christ all His way."

THIRD STATION

JESUS CHRIST FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Eternal Wisdom shares the Humiliation of His Creature

Christ's soul, say the mystics, came into the world in order to show man's soul the one and only way out of the world. It needed such an exhibition if man were ever to believe that this strange path—as it seems, one long, dull sequence of squalid ineffectual miseries—is the veritable road which leads from Illusion to Reality. It needs, too, a faithful watching on man's part, a sincere acceptance of the thing seen, however amazing, however disconcerting it may be, if he is to tread honestly in the steps of his Pattern and come at last to the summit of the hill.

The neophyte, coming full of ardour

to the Way of the Cross, tends to ignore certain incidents of that Way. Cross-bearing and crucifixion, the poignant encounter with human grief, the world's injustice and indifference, even the martyr's death—these are heroic matters, fitting incidents of the life of the spirit; and these he gladly, even eagerly, accepts. But he forgets that there is one act—one only—which is three times repeated in this drama of the mystic way: as if the Spirit of Life would cry in our ears, our deliberate deafness notwithstanding, that *This* is the essential thing.

That supreme expression of the Divine Idea Who trod this Way before us stumbled and fell three times under the necessary burden of the Cross. He was borne down by the very instrument of His victory, failed as it seemed publicly, completely, and ignominiously in His task: and this, not once, but again and again. At each of these falls the Church makes a solemn station; three times she calls

upon her children to acknowledge this mystery, as an integral part of the drama of Faith.

The young and fiery Christian does not care to think of all that this may mean to him: of the biting humiliation of such a repeated inability to bear the burden of Love. He does not perceive that the Cross of Life must of necessity be too strong for our bodies, if it is to be strong enough to raise our souls to God. Christ's way was the complete and fearless sacrifice of the body for the giving of greater life to the soul: the sacrifice, if needs must, of that body's very dignity and beauty, God-given though they be, and an image according to their measure of the First and Only Fair. In our journey with Him and to Him, there must be no clinging tight to these or any other specific manifestations of His splendour; freely given, freely they must be given back again.

"The love of Jesus," says Ruysbroeck, "is at once avid and generous.

All that He has, all that He is, He gives: all that we are, all that we have, He takes." Yet even so, the most commercial of contemplatives dare not say that he has bought the Beatific Vision very dear.

The eager acceptance, then, of a task manifestly beyond our strength is to be a condition of our attainment. All the world's prudent maxims as to moderation and efficiency, the wastefulness of over-exertion, the folly of those who would attempt too much, are silenced by this paradox: by the spectacle of the Eternal Wisdom falling under the burden of His mighty task, rising and struggling again. We are offered as our supreme example a quixotic chivalry, a heedless generosity, which does not shrink from the most ignominious of all aspects of the folly of the Cross.

It is a shock to the convert—new-fledged, heroic—full of the glamour of his stupendous Creed and inclined to think its Symbol less a burden than a

crutch upon the way, when his first effort ends in utter failure, and he falls, weak and helpless, beneath that crushing weight. It is a greater shock when he discovers this abject humiliation to be an implicit condition of the spiritual life: that joy in failure is to be the test of the heroic and selfless quality of his love. Such a joy, such an immortal gladness, is the touchstone of the mystic state. When "all that we have" our Divine Companion really takes, it cannot matter whether we go upright at His side or lie crushed beneath the mighty process of His unresting, self-evolving world. For true lovers of the Absolute the Way of the Cross is no melancholy pilgrimage, even in its darkest hours: but an exhibition of high-hearted and exultant passion triumphing under the most squalid circumstances of outward loss.

Impressiveness is not always with the victor: life, in her most crucial moments, often chooses odd champions from the æsthetic point of view. The

centurion and his soldiers were magnificent; yet they were the inheritors of a dying world. The cross-bearer was the object of a contemptuous pity: He had no beauty that we should desire Him. He represented little else to the onlookers than the pathetic fate of a mission that had failed. Yet He — not any obviously successful and imperial spirit—was humanity's "lovely Forerunner" on the most vital and eternal of all quests.

There is a discipline in failure which makes of it a more constructive process than the most complete, most hardly-won success. It is the only useful test of that humility which is the necessary armour of those who ride with Wisdom in the lists: of that detachment which is the measure of our loyalty to His interests: that generosity whereby we participate in His all-forgiving love of other men.

That we should arm ourselves with humility for His service is less a

counsel of perfection than a maxim of prudence: an invitation to us to accept the only efficient protection against the hard and skilful buffets of the world. "He that is down need fear no fall." The lowly of heart cannot be bruised in the course of his encounter with life's disasters: humble already, humiliation hurts him not. He is safe. "Now shall I say you what they be that sit in the mountain above the wind and the rain. These be they that on earth have neither shame nor honour nor dread for anything that befalls."

That we should have detachment is but another way of saying that our Master's interests are our own, and that joy in the steady progress of His Cosmos overpowers the sorrows of our falls. "*Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis!*" said, and still say, the harbingers of the Living Christ. That detached good will, that cheerful and self-forgetting concentration on the interests of the

All, the great life in which, perhaps, we play a painful or a dreary part—the only test of this, is its survival in individual failure. It is the price of inward peace: the incomprehensible, persistent peace of weak and struggling spirits, which survives in spite of their falls, in spite of every circumstance of squalor that threatens to destroy the dignity of their great mission in the eyes of a contemptuous world.

Lastly, the sweetness and generosity of our spirits—our love of other men—is tested as we stumble and fall helplessly beneath the mystic Cross. To forgive those who made us martyrs is not difficult. They are the unwitting instruments of our glory: the occasions of heroism. To forgive those who robbed heroism of its dignity, who made it contemptible, caused its sufferings to be less splendid than ridiculous, less terrible than abject—this is a very different task. Hence many whose ardent souls are nerved up, they think, to Calvary—to the

injustice of the world, the weight of the spiritual sacrifice, the solitary tortures of the Cross—fail here. They resent the commonplace mortification of the fall beneath the load; mere ordinary, piteous, human failure, the weak body refusing duty in the first great demand made on it by the soul. Yet the Divine Humanity itself was not strong enough to carry without falling the weight of Its own great destiny and ours. "*Sic patiente Deo, tu quoque disce pati.*"

FOURTH STATION

JESUS CHRIST IS MET BY HIS MOTHER

The Eternal Wisdom encounters Human Love

It is surely humanity's most poignant moment when the best that it has produced confronts the best that the spiritual universe has given. Then, as at no other station of our journey, the awful travail of the Eternal Wisdom is revealed to the soul in whom He has been born, and who has learned to love Him as her dearest possession, adore Him as her God.

In this supreme hour she looks into the eyes of that Perfection who is at once her Creator and her Son: the most intimate of all mysteries, the most mysterious of all intimates. That glance brings with it the full realisation of her impotence, as well as of her love. She knows

then that for all her self-devoting passion, all the humanity that she can muster—her care, her patience, her grief—her place, in so far as she is human, is still at the foot of the Cross. The holy thing which has come forth from her, the Christ whom she has borne, must mount it alone. Earth, even at her highest—deep-bosomed, warm, most glorious earth, the very hand-maiden of God—can only look on in grief and amazement when the Spirit that she has borne passes suffering but unswerving on Its way.

It is of the essence of our love for the Blessed Virgin that she is thus "one of ourselves." We produced her: she is *our* Lady, humanity's contribution to the Eternal Plan. Our Lady—our very own—utterly of our substance. *Ma*-donna says the Italian, with a yet deeper sense of intimacy.

"*Ave, Maria gratia plena!*" cries the Catholic Church, speaking here the very tongue of angels. "In thee the

earth has fulfilled itself. Humanity in thee has ascended to the summit of its spirit, dramatised its most sublime potentialities. Therefore—as it were of necessity—*Dominus tecum*." Because of this plenitude of grace in the soul of a woman, because Mary first conceived God in her heart in a purer, deeper, and completer sense than all the saints could do, He was born in her womb. Her human perfection, soaring up, met the Divine Perfection half-way. In this complete fusion of matter and spirit, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Mary, then, standing at the summit of the race—Earth's purest prayer taking material form—stands for us all in this encounter with her Son. In her humanity, so far as it possesses spiritual vision, encounters its suffering Creator: the Repairer at His eternal work amongst man's sins and blunders. In her all lovers of the Eternal Wisdom taste their share of the anguish of His Cross. Here too,

perhaps, we may see under veils something of the share taken by God, the infinitely loving — who is, says Julian of Norwich, not only our Father but our Mother — in the necessary passion of His striving sons. Because He is in the deepest sense one with us, "not only with us but in us"—as all life-givers, all artists persist actually in their creations, as the mother cannot be wholly severed from that which she has borne—so He suffers in and with us, as mothers in their children's griefs. Infinitely pitiful, He makes our pain His own, as Mary made the sorrow of her Child; and crowns it with the thorny diadem of supreme, self-giving Love.

"Here," says Julian, revealer of the secrets of love, "I saw a part of the compassion of Our Lady Saint Mary: for Christ and she were so oned in love that the greatness of her loving was the cause of the greatness of her pain. For in this I saw a Substance of Nature's Love, continued by grace,

that creatures have to Him: which Kind Love was most fully showed in His sweet Mother, and overpassing; for so much as she loved Him more than all other, her pains passed all other. For ever the higher, the mightier, the sweeter that the love be, the more sorrow it is to the lover to see that body in pain that is loved."

God's love, then, which is Height, Might, and Sweetness, brooding above us, sorrows for our pain. Our love in its turn, so far as it participates in the nature of Divine Charity, grieves for His travail when, as it must, it encounters Eternal Wisdom on its way. Then we meet face to face the pain and effort of the universe: that crescent love within our souls which urges us homewards sees, abruptly, the Greater Love, "*che move il sole e le altre stelle*," straining at Its task. Then, indeed, we know "the compassion of Our Lady Saint Mary," the grieving helplessness of mere humanity con-

fronted by the divine, inexorable process of the world. The higher, mightier, and sweeter the love which it evokes in us, the nearer to the pattern of His Mother and ours—the more closely we are associated with Mary's heart, the maternal heart of humanity—the more sorrow we shall have to see His pain.

Now since the human soul is in essence the source of manly energy no less than of maternal love—since we are destined not only to bear and cherish in our ground the Inward Christ, but also to ride with Wisdom in the lists—this sorrow of ours must be no passive emotion. Like all other dormant faculties which Christ's touch stings to life in us, it must work in us according to its measure, rouse us to new energies, send us out into the road to follow Him. Our encounter with Divine Suffering is no mere opportunity of static grief. It is one more invitation to spiritual freedom, one more chance to volunteer, to en-

list in the ranks of the Real, offered to the reluctant human soul.

If we do volunteer, if we elect to play a conscious part in the pageant of the universe, then, once again, Christ's experience becomes ours. In so far as we are human, we have looked with Mary's bewildered grief and love at the tortures of others who have trod the Way of the Cross. We have deplored, though we can never understand, the necessary anguish endured by Sanctity on its road towards its Source. Now we, too, in so far as we obey the Christ-ward tendency within our souls, must suffer under the grieving gaze of those whom we love.

There is something which exhilarates us in the thought of cross-bearing in the teeth of our enemies. But it is a hard saying that we must here defy the hopes, the gentle counsels, at last the bitter sorrow of our friends: disappoint the loving care of those to whom, as it seems, we are most closely

linked by God—in and through whom, perhaps, His Love has forced an entry to our tight-shut souls, and who have been for us indeed the "Mothers of the Divine Grace." We hate it. We rebel: call it an "unchristian act." But "so did your lovely Forerunner," says an angel's voice in the ear of the poor maddened soul, caught there —held as in a vice—between the inexorable call of Calvary and the last, most passionate appeal of Mary's breaking heart.

FIFTH STATION

THE CROSS IS LAID ON SIMON OF CYRENE

Humanity's First Opportunity—Active Co-operation

If we—as one of the penalties inseparable from human devotion to great causes—feel as we rise higher a growing desire to disallow our kinship with the ordinary and unspiritual: what, then, must it have been for Perfect Strength and Perfect Liberty, self-limited to the point at which He became tempted in all things as we are, to find that His very mission of redemption could not be performed without the help of other men? The Incarnate God alone could not carry the cross. He must have man—mere normal male energy—to help him on His way. The solidarity of mankind —more, of all Life—the interdepen-

dence of matter and spirit, heaven and earth, God and the soul, never received a more striking manifestation. "God needs me as much as I need Him!" cried the daring Meister Eckhart. Here, in this amazing episode of Wisdom's pilgrimage, his claim is justified.

The Great Work, it seems, cannot come to its term without the free and willing co-operation of each one of us. The Cross-bearer of the Universe as He passes in our midst does not act *for* us but *in* us: by an enhancement of our energies, a call to us to use our vitality in greater, and less self-regarding efforts: to take up every opportunity of service which meets us in the way, however trivial and ephemeral it may seem. Simon of Cyrene stood to gain nothing by his act. It was not even inspired by a sentimental interest. It was just work: plain work that needed to be done. Something—not for him a specially important something—was in progress. It could not

be completed without help. He gave the help, simply and efficiently: and thus contributed the share of honest labour to the final redemption of a workers' world.

Here, then, in God's necessity is suddenly revealed man's great opportunity: the consecration of physical strength, of simple unselfconscious effort, in so far as that strength be honestly and mercifully used. It is not always by a clear understanding of the situation, an educated sympathy with the "idea of progress" that we best fulfil our office in relation to the Divine Plan. The women of Jerusalem understood very well what went forward. The disciples of Jesus were grieved by His pain. Simon of Cyrene understood nothing, beyond the plain fact that his help was needed in the bearing of a very heavy load. Giving it, he bequeathed to us the sublime image of All-knowing God and ignorant man sharing as brothers the burden of the Cross.

Every soul, then, is called sooner or later to the office of Simon of Cyrene: to a sharing of the travail of its striving Creator. In its ecstasy of giving, the Divine Generosity did not shrink even from a sharing of His most sublime activity, His eternal and redemptive sacrifice, with the simplest and rudest of those creatures for whose imperfection He marred His own loveliness. All men, all types, all temperaments, all the faculties of our being, have their place upon the Way of the Cross. Here, in his willing, hard laborious service, the plain man—unconscious of all spiritual subtleties—comes nearest to the secret of the spiritual world. In virtue of his own steadfast helpfulness, of strenuous labour honestly performed, he becomes a follower of the Eternal Wisdom in the closest and most literal sense.

> "In cinque mode appareme
> Lo signor in questa vita" (6)

sang Jacopone da Todi. One of those ways—one of the five great encounters

of God with the human soul—he called the encounter of Wayfaring Love. Wayfaring Love, hard of recognition in its travel-stained garments, may overtake us at any time. It may be any one of the million shrouded burdened figures which companion us upon the way. We never know when the poor, feeble, and stumbling fellow traveller who asks of us, suddenly, a friendly hand in the bearing of his load —a load whose very nature may seem to us the proper punishment of his folly or his crime—lifting a tired face towards his helper, will suddenly reveal to us the features of the First and Only Fair.

The price of that vivifying glance into the eyes of love is the cheerful risking of our labour in the service of ordinary humanity—perhaps, as we think, of mere "undeserving" wretchedness. Sharing the burden of our fellow-wayfarer, learning the nature of his griefs, we penetrate his secret: to find that it is the "open secret" of all

Life, the piteous and royal secret of the bearing of the Cross. Christ comes to us thus through other men, easily and inevitably, if we will but make Him a way: set the bridge of the Cross between their shoulders and our own. "And this," says Ruysbroeck, "is the first coming of the Bridegroom to the soul": that Bridegroom Who is indeed "the Son of the Eternal One, in whom all blessedness is seen and known."

Now since Perfection in the fulness of His Divine generosity does not shrink from the humiliation of man's help, but makes us, gladly, fellow-workers with Him—assistant priests in the ineffable sacrifice of love—we, treading in His steps, conforming to His pattern, must not refuse the help of other men. No created spirit—no, nor yet the very uncreated Spirit of God—can bring the Great Adventure to a satisfactory conclusion by dint of keeping themselves to themselves. We must learn, then, to take help as

charitably as we give help: and sometimes this is the more difficult task. We must learn to take it where it is offered, however unsympathetic to our interests the helper may appear. It was not one of the friends of Jesus who was detailed to help bear the weight of the Cross: but an outsider, a wayfarer, a dull and ordinary peasant, who knew nothing of the significance of the event. So, often enough, those whom we regard as "unspiritual" have been the best helpers of the spiritual quest. They have brought their reserve of vitality to the soul in her moment of weakness; and she has utilised it in the bearing of her load. In such hours the strength of Simon of Cyrene is more essential to the business of redemption than the loving comprehension of St John.

We then for our weakness must submit to be helped by those who know nothing of the great issues of the journey. We must not be sur-

prised if we find ourselves unable to do without the assistance of those persons whom we call "materialists" and "unbelievers" "destitute of the religious sense." They may be blind: but then we are very feeble. In the end we shall find that the Way can only be trodden—the Cross carried—if we will consent to an alliance between our vision and their strength.

SIXTH STATION

THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST WIPED BY VERONICA

Humanity's Second Opportunity: Loving Receptivity

In Veronica and her action we have a singularly exact, as well as a beautiful, symbol of the receptive attitude in which we stand towards God's image: the conditions under which it may be imprinted on our souls. More, we may discern here not merely a symbol of this His utmost gift to us, but also something of our duty in relation to it. Along with our share in the mysteries of His eternal sacrifice, we receive the necessity of passing on the Divine Imprint. "*Donner est chose naturel à Dieu.*" It must become a second nature to His sons. His Passion gave

to us Love's image: our passion must give it to the world.

It is strange how near this brings Him to our hearts: how easily Veronica's portrait—limned in such an hour, by such a means—has earned the title of Veritable Image of our God. We know this failing, struggling yet unconquerable Christ, the Man Who fell upon the road, Who had to be helped, from Whose face—the face of Divine Humanity—a pitiful woman wiped the sweat, far better than we know the Messiah Who was transfigured in the Mount. The true outlines of that ineffable figure, radiant of the Uncreated Light—Christ our God, the Eternal Word of our becoming—are veiled from us, as its shimmering radiance veils from us the true outline of the sun. Only when we turn to His humanity, which we share with Him, can we recognise His splendour without risk of blindness: as sunlight is most actual to us in the dust which it

turns to gold. Then, through that merciful mist, we see the veritable image of Divine Perfection, which His sufferings imprinted upon the consciousness of the race. It is the image of human weakness, manly courage, self-forgetting love.

The Eternal Wisdom still treads the path beside us. Day by day the drama of His eternal passion is set before humanity. His feet still set the measure whereto the worlds keep time. His true image may still be sought, if we know the secret, at the hands of those who help Him on His way. In and through the travail, the anguish, the patient endurance of the Universe, these have perceived the features of Reality. "The blue and the dim and the dark cloths," heaven and earth, hill and forest, city and wilderness—the whole mighty, living picture of the world—still gives back to those who gaze steadfastly the image of a striving, loving God. We, then, if we will but run to the encounter of

Life, offer it our lowly services, minister to the pain and weakness inseparable from its splendour and strength, may receive in payment for our most menial offices the image of Perfect Beauty, born of the humble sufferings of Perfect Love.

The True Image. His world will give that back to us from the most unexpected places, if we be but receptive enough: if we will learn of the contemplatives to hold out our consciousness before Him in His coming, cleansed from the stains of earth, that it may receive the imprint of the Divine. But a oneness must be established between the Life of the Spirit and the instinct of our hearts if that imprint is to take effect. Until some divine alchemy has made these hearts sensitive to the rays of the Uncreated Light, we shall not give back its picture to the world. We must react, eagerly, quickly, to the striving life-process of the Eternal Wisdom—feel for it and in it—love it, not only

in its beauty but in its need of us, its costing toil, if we would receive in our turn the character of its life.

Veronica, because of her simple and pitiful love, received the Divine Image easily—naturally almost. She offered a humble service to the suffering man, and ever afterwards there dwelt with her the features of the loving God. As we go up and down the world, meet its pain, its weakness, and its holiness, that Image everywhere awaits our first self-forgetting act of ministry. It awaits Science toiling in the laboratory, Art striving to give beauty to its brethren and save their souls by this infusion of reality, Pure Love as it tries to lessen the torments of degeneracy, wickedness, and death. In and through the striving world, the Triune God of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty treads His way. He is served and discovered in each act of service rendered to that world, since He is its very substance, Life of its life, and there is no existence out of Him.

"Look upon the face of Thy Christ!" cried the Psalmist. Where? In the vineyard and the harvest field: in all Earth's patient round of death and birth. Above all, in the record of humanity's self-giving labours, sacrifices, and griefs. There the royal features come out, undeniable; the Divine Face, so little to be guessed at under the shadow of a clumsy cross, through the gathered dust and sweat of exhausting and undignified toil. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," said the Old Dispensation. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou give God's image to the world," says the New: lifting man by this covenant to a conscious partnership in the stern business of the Universe, the veritable inheritance of the Sons of God. There is here no abatement of his anguish and travail, but a raising of humanity to the companionship of the Striving Christ.

What, then, will give our image, our veritable image, the image of our

realest, truest selves to the watching world? Only our willing and complete reaction in freedom to that stress and anguish which is a part of our dowry as Sons of God, as sharers in the Universal Life. We are known in our works, in so far as we give ourselves utterly; in so far as those works are the fruit of travail and difficulty, of total consecration; in so far as they tax to the utmost our courage and strength. Then it is that the features of Divine Humanity show themselves, to be received and recognised at the hands of ministering love. The portrait of the perfect Christian offers little satisfaction to our æsthetic instincts. It is a picture of human weakness persevering beneath the whip of unconquerable charity: enduring all anguish in the interests of the world's eternal life. "Thus did your lovely Forerunner." The faithful squire can only answer, "It is enough."

SEVENTH STATION

JESUS CHRIST FALLS A SECOND TIME

The Eternal Wisdom stoops to the limit of His Creature

All pagan peoples have thought, as it were by instinct, of serene and comfortable gods: holders of power, with none of power's penalties: givers of grief, who knew nothing of pain. Even those who most clearly manifested the Divine energy—as Apollo—did so by the easy and beautiful exhibition of strength without stress.

But the Christian ideal, it seems, is something very different from this: it is the holy Spirit of Life triumphing in weakness, matter racked to the uttermost in order that its divine potentialities may be brought forth. It is the bitter upward climb towards complete self-dedication, with God

Himself our pioneer upon the way. More, it is the Ineffable Majesty of God stooping to teach man the divine art of lowliness: Perfect Love falling, willingly making Itself contemptible before men, that thus it may descend more nearly to the poor fallen status of the Beloved.

This willing fall of God to a sharing of our limitations is the very centre of that mystery which we call the Incarnation of the Word. "Thus," said the Eternal Truth to St Catherine of Siena, "the height of the Divinity, humbled to the earth, and joined with your humanity, made the Bridge and reformed the road. Why was this done? In order that man might come to his true happiness with the angels. And observe, that it is not enough in order that you may have life, that My Son should have made you this Bridge, unless you walk thereon." Christ the Roadmaker does not suffice, without pilgrim man to tread the road.

There can be no shirking, then, of

the incidents of the journey if we are to attain the journey's end. We are to walk the Bridge manfully, risk the slippery places, submit in all things to the rough process of life. Not one fall by the way, for the humbling of the hero in us: the Pattern of our perfection achieves His triumphs, His kingship in our hearts, by a pilgrimage of which failure, and continued agonising effort under failure, is the beginning, the middle, and the end. Life, hard and evil to the creature, was hard and evil to the Creator too. Then as now it brought no outward circumstance of splendour to adorn the spiritual adventures of man. Rather every station of the way outrages anew our conception of Eternal Beauty: at every step a fresh defiance is hurled at the prejudice and fastidiousness of the timorous flesh, which would suffer indeed, but only under self-chosen conditions of refinement.

But it is the whole Pageant of Life,

not the Interlude of Beauty, at which the true initiate of Christianity is invited to assist; and life has no place for fastidiousness, few prizes for the dainty and refined. In all her most vital processes there is a strange element of squalor; a brutal directness, a willing alliance with the crude stuff of earth.

In every incident of the Mystic Way the great Cross-bearer of the Universe cries in our ears, "Accept, accept! Live boldly, dangerously, and completely, without fastidiousness. Accept the mud and slime, the heat and misery, the odious disabilities of the flesh. Accept the rabble, the ignominious struggles, and the falls. Wisdom's path is no swept and shaded avenue, but the hard and beaten highway of the World. This is the straight way to God. Accept!"

It is the same voice which has said to us in another and more secret hour, "*Accipite et manducate.*" Accept and eat! What? The coarse and com-

mon bread of life, the crude unlovely substance of the earth, consecrated for us by God's Passion that it may become, mysteriously, a mode of the Divine: pushed, as it were, by our prayerful activities into that spiritual world, where it is transmuted into the very Substance of Love. Take it then, and shrink not from its accidents. "*Hoc est enim Corpus meum*" (7).

Certain Gnostic philosophers have spoken of the fall of spirit into matter as the origin of all our griefs. It is the "fall of man" in another and more transcendental dress. But it may be that the fall of spirit into matter—rather its fall in and with matter, the self-limiting of God Immanent, the abdication of distant, separate, and imperial rights—is the occasion, not of Spirit's failure, but of its most sublime success. The dogma of the Incarnation, the drama of the Passion, hint it. The sacrament of the altar exhibits it. Spirit, falling

with matter's feebleness, merged with our striving, ineffectual life, supremely manifests its own strength. Spirit, consenting to the limitations of matter —God consenting to the weakness of man—communicates to us its rarest secret, nourishes us with the very Bread of Life.

"*Hoc est enim Corpus meum!*" Here, indeed, is the deepest mystery of our Faith; that the true and super-substantial Bread should be given to us thus, deliberately, under the trivial accidents of material life. Not distilled from the world of grace, but pushing out from the world of nature, an implicit of the harvest-fields of earth. More, the medium of the soul's most secret nourishment is often the harsh bread of failure, of ugliness, of dismal impotence; made for us, actually, the Heavenly Food of which Saint Ambrose said, with a boldness of imagery only possible to the saints, "*Manducat te Angelus ore pleno; manducet te peregrinus homo pro modulo suo, ne deficere*

possit in via, tali recreatus viatico" (8). God nourishes His sons in divers manners; and often enough it is the food of failure which is the accident of our most complete communion with Him.

In this incredible communication to us of the Divine Substance, given to us so mysteriously in the very moment in which we lie crushed, fallen on the road under His hand—when our striving is stilled by our very helplessness and He alone works and speaks—a strange ecstasy invades the wearied soul. To fall thus with Christ is a lover's secret, and confers a bliss unknown to mere success. "I must rejoice without ceasing," said Ruysbroeck, "although the world shudder at my joy!" He could not help it, for he had tasted of that transmuting food which is ministered to us by the wounded Hand of God: the Living, True, and Pure Bread "having all sweetness and all savour, which ever refreshes us and never faileth,"

giving of its undying life to a dying world.

> "Ecce panis angelorum
> Factus cibus viatorum" (9).

So little a thing as it seems: so bewildering lowly: yet the channel by which the Infinite flows in. It is the second fall of Wisdom, that He may reach His people's hearts. So, as it seems sparsely and coarsely fed with the hard crust and common cup of existence — in the midst of undignified grief, humiliating failures, incessant strife—"pilgrim man" eats, according to his measure, of the one true viaticum; breaks bread with Christ.

The Chalice and the Host, then, go before us on our journey: an eternal memorial of Wisdom's willing fall to the redemption of man's foolishness, of the transcendent humility and unsearchable love which dwells upon our altars behind the baffling veil of common things. "*Qui edunt Me, adhuc esurient, et qui bibunt Me, adhuc*

sitient" (10), said the Eternal Wisdom. We are bidden at this feast to partake of the Divine craving for Perfection: to the communion of Insatiable Love. But we must take all: the very bitter chalice of His tribulation along with the life-giving Bread. "*Multi Jesum sequuntur usque ad fractionem panis, sed pauci usque ad bibendum calicem passionis*" (11). His friends cannot refuse to drink with Him the cup of failure: which is often more bitter than the cup of death. "*Calicem Domini affectanter bibe, si amicus ejus esse, et partem cum eo habere desideras*" (12).

EIGHTH STATION

THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM MOURN FOR OUR LORD

The Soul as a Spectator of the Divine Tragedy

Human Love in Our Lady, Contemplative Love in St John, Ministering Love in Veronica, Male Energy in Simon of Cyrene — all these, according to their several dispositions, trod faithfully and with courage the Way of the Cross. But there was a group which watched: unwilling to be implicated in His sufferings, yet full of tearful sympathy when He passed by.

The daughters of Jerusalem were the heirs of an old tradition: not inimical to spiritual beauty, not insensitive to the passing by of God. They wept when the world sent Perfect Love to the Cross. But the Eternal Wisdom does not accept the senti-

mental grief of the looker-on. Rather, He grieves for those who will not go with Him; who lack courage, dare not plunge in, give themselves to the onward sweep of the Universe towards its home in God. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me. I am treading the path of intensest life. Weep for yourselves and for your children, because you are cowardly and stand on one side. Weep because you have so poor a sense of actuality that you remain external to My sufferings: that you stand and watch: that you follow prudently and far off whilst your Creator treads the Way of the Cross. Do not weep because you are suddenly confronted by the awful process of Divine Life in your midst, have perceived, once for all, the inexorable movement of the world: but rather because you are not up and doing, risking pain and failure in the interests of reality. I have piped to you, and you have not danced. Weep because you are holding yourselves outside

the current of life: because you are meanly content with the safe and prudent virtue of compassion, have not the spiritual vitality, the talent for romance, necessary to those who would live dangerously and completely with Me."

"*O crux, ave! spes unica!*" (13). How many are those who grasp what it really is that they are affirming, when they make this appalling act of faith? Some, perhaps, are merely daughters of Jerusalem. They recognise Life's supernal symbol: they are touched, and weep as it goes by. They have an ignoble inclination to put their hope in somewhat done for them—somehow, mysteriously and once for all, long ago—a thing which they have no intention of doing for themselves. To be an orthodox and sympathetic spectator of redemption is to share, they think, in its effects. They gently deprecate the folly and excesses of those who travel upon Wisdom's path: who cry with Rutherford, "*Come and*

see will tell you much. *Come nearer* will say more."

But most of those who see Christ's self-expression in Creation are at least dimly aware that nothing can be hopeful for us—can have any meaning for us—unless it enters our field, is taken up into our growing, living, unresting experience: unless in fact we make it our own. The art of life is learned only in the living: lookers-on know nothing of this game. "Who danceth not, knows not what is being done."

God, said Patmore, is the one Reality; and we are real only in so far as we are in His order. It is no criterion of our reality that we should be moved by contemplation of His Passion to a sentimental grief.

The passion which is demanded of us as the price of union, of entrance into His order, is not a fluid emotion, but an industrious and courageous love. We must be so oned with Him that His acts become ours, no less

than His gifts. His life within our hearts must be the source of all our energies: so that we do not merely follow, but keep step, upon the way. To know His attributes, to weep for the mystery of His pain, is but to heap up condemnation for those who were able to feel, but refused to be. We draw near the Eternal Wisdom only when love prompts us to a sharing of His life, to a fearless pressing onwards at all costs towards new manifestations of that life and that spirit; not when we are moved to bestow on Him a feeble sympathy or a passive admiration.

If the Cross, then, be really our one hope, it is because it is Life's supremest symbol; because it sets the rhythm of the Universe and shows us so clearly what we must do. Not because it relieves us in its historical aspect from a disagreeable responsibility, but rather because it is our ever-present rallying-point, our ever-moving standard; interprets to us a transcendent duty, holds out to us an opportunity

of courage which we refuse at our own risk. Live the life if you would know the doctrine: accept the Cross if you desire the Crown. Weep for yourselves, all you who stand by whilst the great mourning-procession of the Universe streams up to Calvary!

The Absolute Life cries in our ears, as it did in those of Mechthild long ago, "'*Oh soul, before the world was, I longed for thee: and thou longest for Me still, and I for thee.*' Come to Me, then, by the only road which leads to the Heart of Life. Come! fear not, poor weak body weighed down by this stupendous destiny. Come! fall and climb, climb and fall, beneath the burden of thine inheritance. So did I before thee: so do I still in and with thee: for I am thy Father, Brother, Comrade, and sure true Friend."

Here, then, all attempts to shirk the travail of the Universe—all our wilful, cowardly, self-deceptive choices, mean evasions of reality, refusal of pain, our eager drinking of the Wine

of Life whilst we shut our eyes to the wounded Heart from which it flows—receive their condemnation. They are acts of mutiny, rebellions against the only law of love. The Cross-bearer meets us, inexorable. We see the marks of struggle, of brave and difficult endurance, the mercy and compassion which put no limits to self-spending: and we weep for pity at the sight. We cry "*Quo vadis?*" in sorrow and amazement—as St Peter cried to Christ on the Appian Way—to a Universe which seems intent on suffering. In so far as we evade life's pressure, stand back from the straight path of Wisdom and of Love, the answer is the same—as the Speaker is the same—"I go to be crucified for thee!"

NINTH STATION

JESUS CHRIST FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

The Eternal Wisdom shares the utmost Weakness of His World

There are four steps, says Richard of St Victor, upon that steep stairway of love by which the soul climbs up to its home in the heart of Reality. Their ascent involves a transmutation of that soul: a purging and readjustment of its qualities, that it may live and breathe in the rarefied air of the heights. The last, the most astonishing of these changes, that which heralds our actual attainment of God, he declares to be a complete humiliation, a glad and willing conformity to the ineffable lowliness of Christ. Suddenly, unexpectedly, the soul that was almost transmuted in the image of God is here utterly abased. Where

she looked perhaps after her labours for a participation in the spiritual world, she is cast down to earth, emptied and stripped of all her hard-earned merit, and, "accepting the form of a servant, is found again as a man." She descends in her ecstasy of love and abnegation below her own proper powers till she has reached the common measure of the race.

The last step, then, on this love-path of the soul and life-path of the Universe is once more a fall in respect of our own nature and strength: a making naught of ourselves and our hard-won spirituality, a rebuke to the individualist, however ardent. So the story of the Cross assures us that our lovely Forerunner the Eternal Wisdom Himself fell prostrate, was humbled to the Earth, in the very moment when the summit of Calvary was at last attained. He came forth from the Earth: His life was the life of men. He shared the weakness of that life, submitted to the necessity of

its surrender before God. This is the consummation of the folly of the Cross. The sentiment of our own sufficiency cannot live in the presence of a Divine Humanity who was content to share with us that most ignominious of all failures: utter and helpless collapse in the supreme hour of sacrifice.

Since love means self-merging in another, and the act of love—in all its grades a mystic initiation—is always a mingling of ecstasy and pain, of profound humiliation and rapturous joy, how in the last resort could we hope to attain God but by a complete self-loss, by some adventure in which "the I, the Me, the Mine" should be utterly abased, and the boundaries of our self-hood—however spiritual—done away? In the end we must stoop to conquer. "Grow, that you may feed on Me!" says one table of our law: but on the other is the paradoxical commandment, "Become as little children, if you would enter in."

This lesson of failure, of littleness, it seems, is to be hammered into us: forced on us, as the beginning, the middle and the end of the Way on which Creation moves from the lower to the higher life. It seems a sad and hopeless creed to those who do not practise it—this creed which is the quintessence of romance—and the Striving Christ, faint with self-spending, an impotent God to those who have not looked Him in the eyes. Yet the initiates of reality, who live with both hands, and tread firmly and steadily upon the way, find a strange exhilaration in this reiterated lesson of our human inadequacy; of weakness at the source of our truest strength. They see in it the very mark of our attainment—our union—the supreme, the bridal gift of Love to love. "He whose nature," says Eckhart, "descends here into the deepest abasement, his spirit flies up into the heights of the Godhead; for joy brings sorrow and sorrow brings

joy." Nothing less than this could quite satisfy us: nothing else mark us out as His, and Him as ours. It is an implicit of Divine Humanity that it should spend its vitality generously and heedlessly in Life's interest: give all, keep nothing, and fall exhausted if need be at the end.

"He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee: a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

Then at last, when by our own losses, our humiliations, our total self-surrender to the strange purposes of His will, we have gained a standard whereby to measure the infinite humiliation of God accepting the limitations of the flesh — then we know once for all that we had never

loved Him, had never dared the intimacy which alone can satisfy our craving, if He had not fulfilled this last demand of quixotic chivalry, had not fallen with us by the Way.

What, then, is it to mean for us—this last fall of the climbing, striving spirit as it comes within sight of its goal? It means a coming up to the frontiers of the spiritual country, where our own wills fail, helpless, and God alone can work. It means the ending of our strenuousness, our separate and personal endeavours: the hard confession of our utter impotence, the giving up of ourselves into His hands. With "the true lovely will of our hearts" we have loved and chosen. We have worked, we have responded, we have done what we could. Now is the more difficult moment of our passivity, in which the Transcendent works Its will. The spent soul is cast down. It can do no more: lies prostrate beneath the burden of its love. But

the larger life enfolds it: carries it on through the last stages of its journey. In the language of the mystics, the "active night" is over; the more dreadful "passive night" begins.

A glad endurance is now to take the place of our glad efforts. Not by any exercise of its own will, but in accordance with the great movement of the spiritual plan, the soul is to be stripped and crucified, raised up to God. We, who have gone to school with Christ in order that we may learn the process and secret of that great and Cosmic life to which it is our happiness to conform, must now be taught that we cannot of ourselves bring the divine adventure to its term. This is not the easiest of our lessons. Love longs to serve: it is restless and eager. Now it is introduced into a plane of being on which it can do nothing but submit to the "terrible initiatory caress of God."

In this disconcerting failure in spiritual activity consists the passive

purification of our spirit: the hardest — the least expected — of our falls upon the way. "Here," says St John of the Cross, "the soul, on account of the great love it has for God, is in great pain and suffering because of the scantiness of its service." We long to work for Him: and lo! we can do nothing at all. Transcendent standards come into sight, give us the measure of our inadequacy, increase our consciousness of impotence. Hence, we seem to ourselves as we go on to be weaker instead of stronger: less, not more real. A strange dimness invades us. We know not where we are, what we can do; and God Himself seems very far away. As Everyman, when he came to the journey's end, saw depart from him his Strength and his Five Wits, so do we. Never does man know himself weaker, smaller, less adequate, than here in this final drastic purging of the very citadel of self.

We are come up at last to Gol-

gotha: to the place of death where the Tree of our truest life is to be planted. All the eager vitality that helped us onward will not avail us here. It has done its business: it is spent. It seems to us that our very manhood, our initiative is taken from us. Instead of the victory we have striven for, we perceive ourselves to be utterly undone. We are come to the summits, to find there an air which we can hardly breathe. We swoon in this all-encompassing atmosphere, this still and dreadful desert of the Godhead: fall in virtue of all those eager powers that we brought with us—now, their work done, their energy exhausted, precipitated to the earth where they belong — that our diviner selves may rise unfettered, to "energise enthusiastically" upon another plane.

This pure surrender, then, this annihilation of I-hood, this utter blotting out of our separate and wilful activity, is the very gage of our

initiation into the "great life of the All." It is the beginning of that death whose "face is toward the Sun of Life," whose "truer name is Onward" —not in virtue of our own separated powers, our ardent spirituality and industrious love, but in virtue of a more difficult stillness and acquiescence in the slow, eternal, forward sweep of God.

TENTH STATION

JESUS CHRIST IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

The Mysteries of the Eternal Wisdom given into the Hands of His Foes

"They parted His garments amongst them" — visible creation, which is the vesture of God. The scientist and the artist snatched their share. The lover took the innermost garment for himself. But they left the Eternal Wisdom, whose veils these things had been—who, robed in them, had gladly shared the meanest life of men—to sacrifice Himself for them alone: unloved by them.

It has been said that man shall not behold God in His nakedness, and live. Even the manifestation of the Word was under the veil of the flesh. The Uncreated Light reaches us—such a

glimpse as we are able to bear — through the veil of beauty, the veil of nature, the veil of human love, the sacramental veil of bread and wine. All these, according to our temperaments, we snatch at and part amongst ourselves: but what of the divine, suffering, self-giving Personality Whom they clothe?

In the piteous exhibition of Calvary, that Personality was for once unveiled before the eyes of men. That last and most horrible of all humiliations, that stripping off of the veils of privacy, which the very saints themselves have feared — this, too, the Godhead has endured for us that we might see.

This which is here shown us is the essence of the Eternal Wisdom: the Secret dwelling at the heart of life: this is that Word "which is through all things everlastingly." Behind the vesture of nature and of art, behind religion, knowledge, beauty, love in its myriad forms—we are, in the last resort, to discern This.

Creative Chivalry, enduring to the utmost: wrung with agony, reduced to weakness in our interest: sparing itself nothing, if thereby our errant souls may have more light.

Perhaps we may see the deepest meaning of the Incarnation as summed up for us, supremely, in this act: the Unsearchable and Absolute Godhead, that "*æterna veritas, vera caritas, et cara æternitas*" (14), within Whose thought we dwell, stripped of His vestments and exhibited before the uncomprehending eyes of all His creatures, loving and loveless, evil and good alike. The King is here, not in His glory, but in His nakedness. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!" we are taught to say. We think it difficult. Yet our Master has said of us, "Though they crucify Me, yet will I show them all."

At such a moment of utmost revelation, man might look to be blinded by some awful radiance "dark with excessive light": might expect a supernal

vision contradicting rather than fulfilling his partial experience and his wistful dreams. But he sees instead a quiet and selfless acquiescence in the most odious accidents of sacrifice, high chivalry in circumstances of squalor, manliness conquering the weakness of the flesh. He sees the piteous heroism of a painful folly: God made manifest, not in His ineffable glory, but in our helplessness and shame.

Here, then, we come face to face with the superb simplicity of the Cross: its easy naturalness, its inclusion and exaltation of all the miseries and humiliations which dog our own heroic efforts, dim their beauty, tarnish their romance. No aspect of life has escaped the glorifying touch of the Christian God. He came that we might have life more abundantly. Not a picked and chosen life: but a life that leaves no corner unexplored, a life that carries us triumphantly through death itself—

even through death's more terrible preliminaries.

As we came into the world, so we go forth: naked, stripped of all things save our humanity. So, too, in the going forth of the soul to God, that return home which is the very object of the mystical quest; of man's clambering of Calvary, his inward transmutation from the unreal to the real. Here there is a summary and inevitable divorce between us and our possessions; all our veils and vestments, however close and intimate, however lovely they may be. They are gone; and with them all our shams and self-hidings, all the polite draperies of life. Men see us as we are when we mount the Cross: over that Bridge nothing but the naked personality can pass. There is no place for the verb *To Have* in heaven: it is annihilated by the verb *To Be*.

"By grace," says the Bride, in the *Fiery Soliloquy with God*, "I have received, as it were, the power of pre-

senting myself formless and naked before the face and presence of the eternal and immovable Truth and changeless Identity which is ever that which *is*."

The grace which confers this awful gift was first exhibited on Calvary. We who aspire to it must be prepared to leave all in its interest: every gracious garment of mind and body which we have woven from the substance of life. This cruel unveiling, this utter destitution, is the very condition of our true freedom: the taking away of all the warm and intimate clothing in which we have wrapped our existence, all that protects us from the keen, sharp air of the Real. The vesture of things and of thoughts is ruthlessly torn away from us; even to the embroideries in which we delighted to dress our faith. All is gone. The soul is stripped of form and image. The long lesson of detachment is made complete.

Nothing is left now but the essential manhood of us: the naked spirit, the energising spark, face to face with the spiritual world. Then, if ever, our divine sonship is disclosed, triumphant: nothing to hide it, nothing to help. There is conferred on us a mysterious participation in that suffering Body of Christ by whose eternal sacrifice we are nourished, and with which we are made one.

ELEVENTH STATION

JESUS CHRIST IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

The Eternal Wisdom bound by Love to His World

The Cross, says Traherne, "is a tree set on fire with invisible flame, that illuminateth all the world. The flame is Love; the Love in His bosom Who died on it. In the light of which we see how to possess all the things in Heaven and Earth after His similitude."

God's way of possessing us, then, is to give Himself for us: and thus only, by self-giving in the interests of life, can we possess all things after His similitude. We, stretching ourselves gladly on the Rood of the World, receive that world as our eternal heritage. "To give all for love is a most sweet bargain." It is the bargain

struck between the Eternal Wisdom and His Universe: between Christ and the human soul.

"I possess nothing, I am nothing, I desire nothing, save Jesus only," said Walter Hilton. So, in another reading of this same mystery of regeneration, of transmuted and exalted life, the soul might say. "I possess nothing, I am nothing, I desire nothing, save the Cross only. *Ave, Crux spes unica!* Supreme and living symbol of the Real! The Artist of the alchemists, the striving Christ, distils under this sign that Tincture of Eternity which confers perpetual youth, turns dust to gold. I accept then with joy my place in a world whose glory, whose salvation is its pain."

The Cross, we have said, is the only Bridge between God and man. Wisdom's path leads to it, and through it to our home. It is the work of the Striving Christ within us, the divine spark at the apex of our soul, to teach

us to create out of our burden—borne in every circumstance of hateful squalor, ineffective weakness—this ladder to the stars.

The imparting of this secret is His sublimest gift to us: the source of that invulnerable radiance which His lovers bear through life. "Peace I leave with you: My Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." I give you one infallible way of escape: one ladder which leads upwards from the fretfulness of transient things to the peace which passeth understanding. That ladder is the Cross. "Cleave unto this Centre, and by it enter into rest." Submit to this curtailing of your liberty, this harnessing of your wild spirit, this ordering of your stormy love. If you desire to escape the illusions of the senses, the fetters of that Selfhood which is the cause of all your griefs—if you wish, once for all, to be raised up into the lucent atmosphere of reality—you must be

transfixed as I was transfixed, raised up as I was raised up; and sacrifice yourself upon that Cross of Being, the arms of which are made of Love and Pain. No escaping earth's conditions, no soaring up now, free, radiant, and transfigured to the spiritual country where we know that we belong; but rather a holding back, a self-limitation, a nailing of us to the harshest emblems of the natural world.

He said again, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." They come still, from the ends of the earth, little guessing the identity of that Truth, that Health, that Love for which they crave, and whose inexorable voice has called them home. No other magnet can compete with the criminal who died on Calvary. The pull of His Passion is felt through all our restless seekings; in many nameless shrines, beneath incredible disguises, "to this our hunger and thirst He gives the pasture of His Body and Blood." Our

complicated quests of knowledge, of certitude, of law—the explorations of philosophy, of science, or of art—all bring us in our own despite to this; to Eternal Wisdom nailed by love to His world, calling us out of that world to share His sacrifice.

But the lifting up, even to that bitter sovereignty, is to be costing for us. It comes only after the wounding of our members: the outpouring of our life. Toll is to be taken of every aspect of our humanity. Our will, stripped and exhausted, must be maimed and broken, if it is to be conformed to the pattern of His death. "What are these wounds upon thy hands? They are the wounds that I received in the house of my friends." They are the insignia of the kingly line; the secret heraldry of Royal Love.

Every wound of Christ strikes through His mystical Body: is a means whereby that Body is united to the Tree of Life. In so far as

we are remade in His image, these wounds must strike through us too. They are the instruments of our glory, our union with Him. The Friends of God are wounded in the hands that work for Him, in the feet that journey to Him, in the heart that asks only strength to love Him: as He too is wounded in His ceaseless working for us, His tireless coming to us, His ineffable desire towards us. We share the marks of His Passion, and He ours.

So, too, is all His Creation grieved most in those very members which express the energy, the liberty, the Godward instincts of its life. In its perpetual striving towards Him, the whole living Cosmos risks and receives the sacred wounds which transfix the Feet, the Hands, the Heart of God. It is hurt in and by its restlessness, its creative industry, its desires. The Law of Love seizes upon these agents of freedom. Charity pierces them, transmutes them to the

service of the All: nails Life—free, urgent Life—to the Eternal Cross. Those disharmonies which are the opportunity at once of strife and of perfection strike through its members, and imprint upon the Universe the Stigmata of Christ.

Eternal Wisdom maimed Himself, marred His beauty, that thereby He might be united more closely with His world. He became man in our interest: He was scourged in and for our transgressions: His heart was pierced that we might enter in. There is no other door to the secret of being than this strait gate in the ramparts of our only home. "*Intra tua vulnera absconde me!*" (15). No idle metaphor, no poetic image: but the grandest petition of the awakened Spirit of Life, pressing at all costs towards its home in the heart of God, the One Reality.

We, then, who aspire to be remade in His likeness, to share His Cross, aspire also to a participation in His

wounds. We cannot be satisfied with less than this : it is the earnest of our consecration, the very essence of our conformity to Him, the fastening of our weak and helpless spirits to His all-saving Life. Life's wounds are plaited close with life's ecstasies. They may themselves be hidden ecstasies to those who have learned the Secret of the King ; for true love is not contented until it has been hurt. It finds its utmost expression in Eckhart's allegory of the Incarnation : the story of the lover who maimed himself, that thereby he might approximate to the maimed condition of the Beloved.

We shall give ourselves, then, as He gave Himself, not sadly and unwillingly, but "full courteously and gladly," saying, as was said to Julian in her Revelations of Love, "If thou art pleased, I am pleased ; it is a joy, a bliss, an endless satisfying to me that ever I suffered passion for thee ; and if I might suffer more, I would

suffer more." We are to be glad givers for Christ, as He for us: eagerly and merrily His children run to the Cross, offer Him their hearts, their hands, their feet. He is there before us: we, stretching ourselves on it, achieve our utmost union with Him. All things are then forgotten: all our renunciations, all our pains. For "a glad giver," says Julian again, "taketh but little heed of the thing that he giveth, but all his desire and all his intent is to please him and solace him to whom he giveth it."

TWELFTH STATION

JESUS CHRIST DIES UPON THE CROSS

The Eternal Wisdom declares His Plan to Men

The mediæval illuminators were accustomed to draw the Tree of the Cross growing out of the Heart of God. It bore seven roses; and in each rose was written the word Love. In the midst of this divine inflorescence, Perfect Love hung and suffered for the salvation of men: as He may be felt, seen, and known by His lovers, hanging, suffering, dying every day. On every Christian altar we exhibit, not only the Drama of Faith, but this eternal process of the world.

It is plain, then, that this process must also be the process of the soul's initiation. It is a death process; and a death not of the body alone. We

are called to the paradox no less than to the Folly of the Cross. "*Scias pro certo*," says A-Kempis, "*quia morientem te oportet ducere vitam. Et quanto quisque plus sibi moritur, tanto magis Deo vivere incipit*" (16). The final death of this narrow self is the stern price of entrance into the heritage of the All: the soul's invulnerable life in God.

All Christians lead a dying life; it is the secret of their strange vitality. They die daily in respect of the unreal and mortal world; and are daily reborn to a new and intense existence in respect of real and eternal things. But the mystical death, the true spiritual crucifixion to which the Inward Christ has urged us on, is a greater matter than this: it is a complete participation in the worst, the culminating agony of the Passion—the loss and absence of God.

After long struggles, many bitter purifications, stripped of our every treasure, and completely surrendered to His will, we are lifted up at last—

upon the Cross that we have carried —towards the life of the spiritual world. At this long-hoped-for moment, as it seems, our very spiritual life receives its death-blow; the vision of that world is taken away. We have sought with courage and humility that Uncreated Light,

> ". . . . che visibile face
> Lo Creatore a quella creatura
> Che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace" (17).

But the Cloud of Unknowing broods upon the summit of the mystic Calvary: the light of sun and moon, divine and human radiance, is hidden by the thick darkness in which the Cross is set. Thus, when the sacrifice of the flesh is consummated, the altar still waits for our souls. A desolating sense of the Divine Absence—of the withdrawal, the utter annihilation, of that for which we have agonised—here descends on us for the first time. All the glorious certitude of the pilgrim, the heavenly knowledge of Responsive Love, goes in this dreadful

hour. "*Eloi! Eloi! lama sabachthani?*" There is no sincere and virile seeker after God from whom this cry has not been wrung, and who has not tasted something of the crowning anguish which the Pattern of all manliness endured.

"The top of the Cross," says Tauler, "is the Love of God: it has no resting place, for at all times it is a pure bare going forth, forsaken of God and all creatures, so that thou canst truly say with Christ, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' The sacred Head of our Lord Jesus Christ had no resting place: if a man experienced Divine Love and a sweet consciousness of God's Presence in his absolute surrender, what would it matter to him though the whole world were against him?"

But it is to matter. There is to be no shirking: no easy slipping for us from this world to that. No love-token meets the Bride upon the threshold: only a dark and open door

through which she must pass alone. All human love is left behind, puzzled and helpless, at this hour. Divine Love, which we thought to satisfy and longed to serve, is amazingly and inexplicably withdrawn. Well might Dante say that only Poverty leapt to the Cross: and she, not the glad giver of liberty whom St Francis knew, but the cruel bringer of spiritual destitution.

It is easy and pretty to embroider the mystical paradox that all must lose to find, and die to live: but a hard matter when we come to the Cross and find that black despair as well as bitter suffering must be faced—that Hope has died, that the Charity in which we dwelt with God no longer glorifies the landscape, that only naked Faith remains. It is the last, supremest test of heroic character: of the completeness of our abnegation, the generosity of our love. Yet for the true lover of the Infinite there is an austere joy even here: in

this utter self-giving, this perfect consecration, with nothing given in return. By such a sacrifice the Lamb of God repaired the broken image of the world.

It is said in *The Privity of the Passion*, "Our Lord Jhesu whilst He hung on the Cross, to the hour of His death He was nought idle, but He taught great perfection." What was the perfection that He taught? Supreme and selfless courage. The courage which faces the outer darkness, the terrible and empty spaces, risks the most awful desolation possible to the spirit of man: the selflessness which gives up the soul's riches as easily as the riches of the world, surrenders its very vision to God's Will. "Losing to find"—losing all that made religion seem worth while, all our self-found relations with Eternity, our knowledge of God, our power of contemplation, the inner peace which carried us through wars and griefs: losing all "merit," all

"spirituality," all our separate will, however pure. Our very prayer taken from us, the horror of divorce from Him made clear to us, till we can only cry in our extremity *"I thirst!"* This is to be the final test of our faith and our detachment: this alone frees the soul from the last bonds of selfhood, lets it fly back to God, respond to His attractive power. The poor little human animal must be almost torn to pieces before Love, "half-angel and half-bird," can spread its wings.

The valiant squire of the Eternal Wisdom must gladly face this call on his endurance. It is the greatest honour that his Master can do him: this call upon a virile, unrewarded, naked faith, on his difficult loyalty, his utter trust. *"Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea, quid timebo?"* (18) cries the enraptured soul upon the illuminative way; basking in its sense of spiritual security. What, indeed, should it fear? The little shadows of earthly misfortunes are hardly, it

thinks, noticeable in that "intellectual Light informed with love." But when the light is put out, the vision of salvation withdrawn; then, what room is left for anything but fear—the blind, black terror of the little child in the dark?

This moment of blackness and horror, then, this dark night of the soul — "shade of His Hand outstretched caressingly"—must be endured by all who would walk in the path of Wisdom, attain to the divine Abyss of God. It is our opportunity for the courageous and all-trusting step into utter emptiness; Nature's benevolent dispensation over and done with, the Beatific Vision not yet attained. This awful darkness, this "obscure silence where all lovers lose themselves," is the last step upon the King's Highway of the Holy Cross. "He therefore who will not go into this dark night to seek the Beloved," says St John of the Cross, "who will not deny and mortify his own will, but

seek Him at his ease and in his bed . . . will never find Him. The soul says here that it found Him, as the soul says of itself that it found Him by going forth in the dark, and in the anxieties of love."

Here too, then, Eternal Wisdom, facing the hardest conditions of His own Universe, showed us what we must do. By His sufferings He repaired the road, and bridged the gap between two worlds. He showed us the drama of our salvation, as no eager appropriation by us of the Divine good-nature, but as a heroic business to the last. He showed death taken up to a higher term, endured in its completeness, spirit, soul, and body, and thus made the very instrument of life. All must die: but it is within the power of everyone to be the martyr of ideals instead of appetites.

"Let us then die," cried St Bonaventura, "and enter into the shadows: let us impose silence on all cares, all

desires and all fancies: let us pass with Christ Crucified from this world to the Father, so that when the Father is shown to us, we may say with Philip, *It is enough!*"

THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS CHRIST IS LAID IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER

The Eternal Wisdom embraced by Human Love

It has been said by a great preacher that "Jesus dead in the arms of Mary is the central fact of the world's tragedy." Here we see it at last in its results—what, left to ourselves, we would do to Perfection if He would let us: the foolish cruelty, the destructive instincts of the separated human will apart from grace, from God.

Yet poignant though this picture be, terrible in its revealing power, perhaps it were truer to say that this cradling of the dead Christ in the arms of His human Mother is the "central fact" which brings to a point

the highest honour that humanity has yet attained.

> "Upon my flowery breast,
> Wholly for Him and save Himself for none,
> There did I give sweet rest
> To my Beloved one;
> The fanning of the cedars breathed thereon."

Here at last our long-desired union with Reality takes place. This is the meeting place of matter and spirit, the worlds of nature and of grace: the higher synthesis of earth and heaven, of man and God.

Here, more truly and completely than at any other point in the mystic way, human love at its highest meets Divine Love at its highest. Human love supremely hopeless, crushed beneath unutterable sorrows, yet never swerving from its office of ministry; never shirking the terrible and direct encounter with failure and death. Divine Love in its hour of complete humiliation, spent with self-giving for a heedless and unworthy world.

"Mater Creatoris! Mater Salvatoris!"

says the Litany of Loreto, striving to find expression for the ecstatic gratitude of Christendom towards the human instrument which forged this, our closest link with Perfect Love. The Creator is dead, the Saviour who saved not Himself is cast back now into the arms of His Mother—open, when all else is closed against Him, to receive the wreck of all that she had brought forth, nourished, and adored.

It is the supreme paradox, final mystery, of the Cross that the Eternal Wisdom should thus seem to us to frustrate Himself. "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the Cross." He did come down at His own time, His work finished; to consecrate for ever the loving ministries of the mourner by this sublime image of the Sacred Humanity lying helpless in His Mother's arms.

"It is finished!" The true consummation of Calvary is here. In this as in all else God treads unshirkingly

the path of His creation. He, who—as it seems to our dim vision—creates only to destroy; who strikes down heedlessly, who has so plaited death with life, weakness with strength, that we can hardly conceive a plane of being which lives and yet escapes the eternal strife, the sweeping storm of change—He offered Himself to destruction, was willingly broken on the wheel of his own Universe. So broken, so slain, He found at last His home and refuge in the sheltering arms of human love.

The august figure of Mary sitting thus at the very gate of death, holding the maimed and broken body of her Child and her God, demands our recognition—even in the face of this awful exhibition of God's will for His sons and for His Universe—as the Mother of all hope and all beauty, no less than the Mother of grief. "'*Ego mater pulchræ delectionis et timoris, et agnitionis, et sanctæ spei. In me gratia omnis viæ et veritatis; in me omnis spes*

vitæ et virtutis' (19). It is a hard saying. But look at me here where I sit, the slain Body of my Son upon my knees: the *Mater Dolorosa*, yet the Help of Christians, Health of sick souls, the veritable cause of all your joy. I am the very symbol of Life, patient maternal life, valiant in suffering, faithful in loss."

"*Gaudeamus omnes in Domino!*" says the Catholic Church, celebrating the feast of Our Lady's Assumption. Let us all rejoice in the Lord of Life, because the faithful and sorrowing Mother, the pure soul capable of receiving her God, is lifted up out of the ruck of humanity to become the Queen of Angels, the high-water mark of the race.

Thus Mary as well as Jesus is seen to be necessary to the elucidation of the total experience of the soul. There is a sense in which each human spirit shares her supreme privilege, is destined to the high office of the Mother of God. In each, if we are ever to

come to our full stature, achieve our inheritance, her Son must be incarnate. "*Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te, et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi*" (20). Under these auspices, quickened by this brooding and supernal Love, each, according to their measure, may bring forth the Striving Christ; the Redeemer and Repairer, Life of our life, Whose birth within us is our initiation into the plane of reality.

Thus the prayer of the Angelus epitomises the soul's true history: the angelic invitation to us, the meek and willing acquiescence in the divine purpose, the result. Mysteriously, in silence, without human intervention, the Word is incarnate in the ground of the soul. The Divine Child is confided to us, our share in God's life, the starry spark which we may cherish if we will. Nourished by our humanity, willingly dependent upon our love and sacrifice,—each soul in this sense is the guardian of God's interests, the Mother of Divine Grace.

It is then to us, to the totality of the world's love and will, that—by a supreme act of Divine humility—the care of the Infinite is confided: the cherishing of His life in the world is left to the maternal instinct of the Race. In the wonderful moment of His coming to us, the Child of Bethlehem is placed in our arms: in the terrible hour of spiritual darkness, when our faith and hope are tested to the uttermost, when Christ seems dead, His cause seems vanquished, we must still be there, steadfast in love, our arms held out for Him. When we do not seem to get anything from it, when nothing is given us but an opportunity for the free spending of our sorrow and our love—here, even at the sepulchre, to do what we can for Him; this is the soul's last and mightiest opportunity to show itself an adept of the true chivalry of God.

If we are to love deeply, there must be the divine appeal of helplessness in that which we love. We are all of us

children of Mary in this: our lowliness, our profound need of self-giving, is best met by the immense humility of a Creator who can condescend to our gentleness and pity as well as to our obedience and our awe. To know Him thus an instant dependent on us is surely our sweetest opportunity: our inalienable right, of which no one can deprive us, not even those who nailed Him to the Cross. Now, when the world has done with Him, He is given back to us. Now at this moment "despised and rejected," He is more utterly ours.

At such an hour the soul asks not what the world has thought of Him. The inebriation of the Cross is on her: the ecstasy of ministering love. "*Gloriari in tribulatione, non est grave amanti*" (21). In the sorrow of Our Lady the intuition of the mystic finds the most secret symbol of her joy. She would rather have grief of Him than gladness of any other: rather be associated in His Passion than free

of all the riches of the world. Here, in this place of weeping, is the paradoxical source of her happiness. Hither she comes through the darkness to claim the most sacred of her rights. "*Amans Deum anima, sub Deo despicit universa. Solus Deus æternus et immensus, implens omnia, solatium animæ et vera cordis lætitia*" (22). He who fills all things, Infinite and Eternal —the only joy of man's craving heart, the only consolation of his pilgrim soul—has not disdained to give Himself into the eager arms of human love.

FOURTEENTH STATION

JESUS CHRIST IS LAID IN THE SEPULCHRE

Death as the Gate of Life

It is surely the strangest, least-to-be-guessed-at paradox of the spiritual life, that Wisdom's path should lead—so far as our poor vision may trace it—not to those hard-won heights of the spirit which are reached by the Bridge of the Cross, but back again to the bosom of Earth, our Mother. Earth to earth. Not even those courageous souls who aspire to the final, utmost transmutation — who have paid the dreadful price of their adoption as hidden sons of God — escape this. Humility, the law of the Cross, sees to it that we find our level: that death be tasted in its fulness by every postulant of life. Those who attempt the

supreme adventure of the spirit ride in the lists under St George's banner. From first to last, courage is the essential condition; courage to face all without flinching, even corruption itself—to face the hateful possibility that the End for which we ride, the final Secret, may after all be found in earth and not in heaven. The squire of the Eternal Wisdom must not elude, but rather endure in a more drastic sense, the fetters, the destinies, the hardships, the disillusionments of the race.

There is in Aquitaine an old Cathedral whose portal is the very picture-book of faith. To those who will read it with attention, it offers one deeply significant gloss on the Christian creed. On each side of its doorway, guardians of the threshold, its sculptors have placed no angels; no hints as it were of a supernatural world, adorable and ineffable, awaiting the initiate within. But they gave to Christian chivalry, to earthly knight-

hood, the honour of keeping this symbol of the Gate of Life. Not St Michael with his legions, not St Peter with his keys: but St George and St Martin—selfless fighter and free giver—stand at the entrance: as if they would warn neophytes of life's mysteries that courage and charity, not knowledge and will, hold the veritable keys of the kingdom and admit to the altar of the Lamb.

Courage and Charity—love and pain—with these two hands Christ our Forerunner conquers Death, pushes open the double doors which shut us from Eternity, and lets the soul pass through. The Eternal Wisdom, going by way of Cross and grave into the atmosphere of Reality, showed us this path, this secret: and confided to us the Cosmic Word of Power, the "Open Sesame" of the spiritual world.

Modern Christian sentiment has somewhat lost touch with this: it deprecates austerity of doctrine, mocks at ascetic practice, no longer loves the

sepulchre of Christ. It demands soft things of its prophets: and looks for an Easter morning without an Easter eve. We need life's harshest lesson before we can comprehend that mystery: the lowest deep touched by the Eternal Wisdom in His redemptive way. But the Light of the World had done little for us had it failed to illuminate the darkness of the grave, to sanctify the horror of contact between the wonder of flesh and the inexorable tomb. "*Venite et videte locum*": come, see the place where Perfect Love has lain. Come, says the Church to her trembling children. Come, says the Spirit to the soul of the contemplative who falters, amazed, upon this unpromising roadway to the Real. Come to the mouth of the grave, that I may show you my final secret. *Solve et coagula*: die that you may live. Here, in this home of corruption, is the Crucible of the Divine Alchemist. Here, and here only, can the tincture of eternity be

distilled from the common stuff of life. The Path of Wisdom passes through the sepulchre: but here death and birth are one, for it is the sepulchre of the Living Christ. He, who came and ever comes that we might have life more abundantly, could find no better way than this. "*Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando: dux vitæ mortuus, regnat vivus*" (23).

At the mouth of the tomb, in the dark hour before dawn, the drama of the Church draws to an end. This is, she says, her "last station." Her pageant is dissolved, her journey done. As Beatrice, *dolce guida e cara*, resigned her care of Dante when he was lifted to the immediate vision of the Essence of God: so here the Mother and Mistress of Souls lays down her office—"the work of the Church ends where the knowledge of God begins." She turns to make her final act of faith, crown and conclusion of her mystery, before the Presence within her tabernacled altar; as if here alone

she can find the corollary of the Easter sepulchre, here catch a glimpse of the Transcendent Life of Easter's dawn.

But she knows her limitations. Before that Supernal Life she can but bow her head, abashed and silent. Its wonder and its mystery enfold her: the very source of her true being. Its spirit inhabits her; so that she even dares to call herself the Mystic Body of her God. But she cannot tell its nature, disclose its secret. That last gift of Love, the supreme encounter with Reality, is given only in the "still wilderness," the solitude where heart speaks to heart.

The way that she has trodden was the Way of Life Triumphant. It began before the judgment seat of consciousness. It ends in the secret garden of the soul. Thither, like the Magdalene, alone and through the darkness, that soul may come to the divine encounter which is the reward of her labour and her love. We ask her what she has seen, and she

answers in the words of Mary, "*Sepulchrum Christi viventis: et gloriam vidi resurgentis*" (24). She has seen the tomb and the Victor, death and life, the Glory and the Abyss: has been initiated into the transcendental plan. It is a dark saying, but clumsy human speech can tell no more: only beneath the veils of music and of poetry can hint the nature of that meeting in the dawn.

"When the first morning air
Blew from the tower and waved His locks aside,
His Hand with gentle care
Did wound me in the side
And in my body all my senses died.

All things I then forgot,
My cheek on Him Who for my coming came;
All ceased, and I was not,
Leaving my cares and shame
Amongst the lilies and forgetting them."

That garden still awaits us, its primal freshness yet untarnished. Still its transcendent secret, new, amazing, ever lovely, is given to those

whose "true and lovely will" has led them in.

". . . Chi prende sua croce e segue Christo
Ancor mi scuserà di quel ch' io lasso,
Vedendo in quell' albor balenar Christo" (25)

He who has courage to tread in its entirety the bitter path of wisdom shall know the Heart of Life, the "light untellable, lighting the very light"; suddenly, irrevocably, transmuting by its rays his very being, "when he shall see Christ lighten in that dawn."

Wide-eyed we gaze into the zenith, poor amateurs of the supernatural, looking for some abrupt and devastating glory coming in clouds of heaven; some "mystic revelation," shattering our earth-bound sense. But it may be that His coming to us will be gentle and natural as the daylight: that first we may discern His radiance low down on the horizons of the world. His very resurrection was as silent in its beauty, as natural in its wonder, as the coming up of His own flowers out of the earth: death giving way

before the inexorable pressure of transcendent life. His risen life itself was a perpetual showing of Himself to His lovers in simple, natural ways.

He went down into the Earth, mother of all fertility, and hallowed it for ever for us. He came back from it again bearing the banner of our redemption: the rosy cross of His Passion seen against the white light of the Real. This utmost identification of Christ with His world is implicit in His continued life amongst us. Earth to earth: and He comes back to us still, not from some strange far-off and spiritual country, but gently, from the very heart of things. "And He was in the midst of them." The Eternal Christ is with us by the sea-shore and in the garden: in the assembly of His lovers, in the breaking of bread, in the most secret chamber of the soul. He meets us by the tomb: and at first we know Him not. He walks with us, and we think Him a pilgrim like ourselves. But when

He reveals to us the wounds of His Passion—when He takes bread and feeds us—then, dim-eyed as we are, we recognise Divine Perfection, the heart of our life, the one Object of our craving: and say with Thomas "My Lord and my God."

"O Oriens, splendor lucis
æternæ, et sol justitiæ:
Veni, et illumina sedentes
in tenebris, et umbra mortis."

NOTES

TRANSLATIONS OF LATIN AND ITALIAN PASSAGES IN THE TEXT

Title-Page. "O Wisdom that comest out of the mouth of the Most High, that reachest from one end to another, and dost mightily and sweetly order all things: Come! and teach us the way of prudence." (Roman Breviary: the Great Antiphons.)

(1) "The Cross, therefore, is always ready, and everywhere awaits thee." (*De Imitatione Christi*, B. II., cap. 12.)

(2) "Behold! in the Cross all doth consist, and all lieth in our dying thereon: and there is no other way to life and to true inward peace but the Way of Holy Cross and of daily mortification. Walk where thou wilt, seek whatsoever thou wilt: and thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below than the Way of Holy Cross. . . . Turn to the heights, turn to the deeps, turn within, turn without; everywhere thou shalt find the Cross." (*Op. cit., loc. cit.*)

(3) "Who is it that suffers?—Christ the Word, Wisdom of the Father. What does He suffer?—

The thorns, the scourge, the spittle, and the Cross. Since God so suffers, learn thou too to suffer."

(4) "Set thyself therefore, like a good and faithful servant of Christ, to bear manfully the Cross of thy Lord." (*De Imitatione Christi, loc. cit.*)

(5) "More greatly did Moses prevail by worshipping in the mountain, than by fighting in the midst of the host."

(6) "In five ways the Lord hath appeared to me in this life." (Jacopone da Todi, *Laude.*)

(7) "Take and eat . . . this is indeed My Body." (Canon of the Mass.)

(8) "The Angels feed on Thee full-mouthed. Let pilgrim man feed on Thee according to his measure: that, refreshed by this viaticum, he may not faint upon the way." (Roman Missal: Præparatio ad Missam: Sabbato.)

(9) "Behold! the Bread of Angels made the pilgrims' food." (St Thomas Aquinas, *Lauda Sion.* See Roman Missal: office for Corpus Christi.)

(10) "They that eat Me shall yet hunger: and they that drink Me yet shall thirst." (Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 29.)

(11) "Many will follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the Chalice of His Passion." (*De Imitatione Christi*, B. II., cap. 11.)

(12) "Drink of the Chalice of the Lord with

eagerness, if thou desirest to be His friend and to have part with Him." (*Ibid.*, cap. 12.)

(13) "Hail, Cross, our only hope!" (*Vexilla Regis.* Roman Missal: Good Friday.)

(14) "Eternal Truth, true Love, and loved Eternity." (*Confessions of St Augustine*, vii. 10.)

(15) "Within Thy wounds hide me." (*Anima Christi.*)

(16) "Know for certain that thou didst ought to lead a dying life. And the more any man dieth to himself, so much the more does he begin to live unto God." (*De Imitatione Christi*, B. II., cap. 12.)

(17) "Which makes visible the Creator to that creature which only in beholding Him hath its own peace." (Dante, *Paradiso*, xxx. 100.)

(18) "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?" (Psalm xxvii. 1.)

(19) "I am the Mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In Me is every grace of the Way and of the Truth, in Me is all hope of Life and of Virtue." (Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 24.)

(20) 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." (Luke i. 35.)

(21) "To glory in tribulation is no hardship for a lover." (*De Imitatione Christi*, B. II., cap. 6.)

(22) "The soul that loveth God despiseth all things that be inferior unto God. God alone is

eternal and infinite, filling all things: the soul's one solace, and the heart's true joy." (*Ibid.*, cap. 5.)

(23) "Death and life strove marvellously together. The King of life being dead, yet living reigns." (Roman Missal: Easter Sunday: Sequence.)

(24) "I saw the grave of the Living Christ, and the glory of His resurrection." (*Ibid.*)

(25) "Whoso taketh his cross and followeth Christ shall yet forgive me what I leave unsaid; when he shall see Christ lighten in that dawn." (Dante, *Paradiso*, xiv. 106.)

Colophon. "O Dayspring! Brightness of the Eternal Light and Sun of Righteousness: Come! and give Light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." (Roman Breviary: the Great Antiphons.)

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